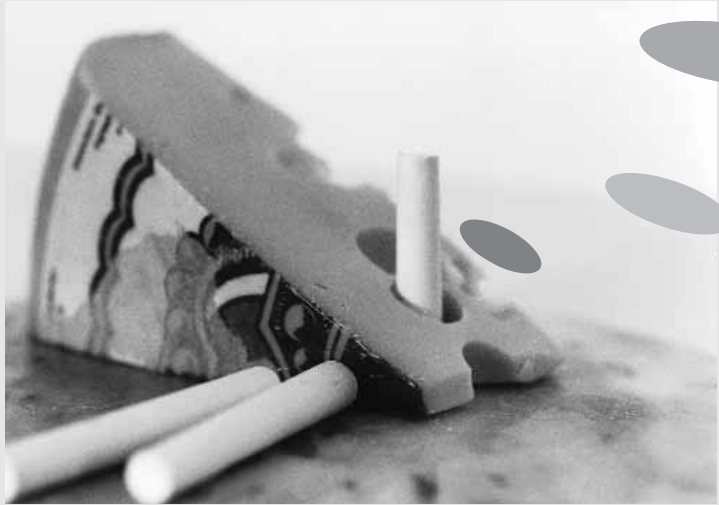




brilliantideas
one good idea can change your life...



Re-energise your relationship

Put the sparkle back into
your loving life

Dr Sabina Dosani and Peter Cross

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Introduction

'Give us the tools and we'll finish the job.'

WINSTON CHURCHILL



In a relationship? Then this book's for you. You don't have to be married, straight, middle aged or old. You can be in an age gap relationship, come from different backgrounds and cultures, classes, clans or castes, it doesn't matter. Nor do you have to wait until you and your relationship have become jaded and tired before trying these brilliant ideas. On the contrary, the earlier you sit down and think about your evolving life together the better.

We all spend so much time developing our careers, raising children and creating gorgeous homes that we often neglect the most important person in our adult life and our relationship with them. There are so many books on the market promising that if you follow these or those rules you'll live in perfect harmony forever. If you're looking for a book like that, this isn't it. We make no promises about stopping arguments forever or never feeling angry with each other again. This is real life. We are here to promote possibilities, not pipe dreams. Forget rules, you need ideas. After all, just one good idea can change your relationship.

Here's the deal. We've got 52 Brilliant Ideas. You use them to invigorate your love life. So what other tools do you need to finish the job? We had a peep in our tool chest and this is what we found:

A pen and paper, for jotting down your own ideas, off-the-wall suggestions and daft thoughts that might, just might, be worth trying. Even in this age of the palmtop, an old-fashioned ballpoint still comes in handy for writing passionate love letters or making notes to plan for your perfect day out.

A ruler or tape measure, for measuring dissatisfaction, despair and discord.

A protractor, to remind you that the best solutions to protracted relationship problems arise when you come at them from another angle.

A compass, because when you are truly lost this handy little object helps get you back in the right direction.

A rubber, to erase those bits best forgotten.

A set of scales, for weighing up the pros and cons of each other's solutions and suggestions.

A claw hammer, to remind you that sometimes romance is elusive and there will be weeks when you just have to keep banging away.

A pair of pliers, so you don't forget that all relationships need regular tweaking and fine tuning, and also to help you hang on to precious moments and memories which easily slip out of reach in the humdrum of daily life.

And finally, **a spanner**, to remind you not to throw it in the works.

You will find hundreds of things that you can do to improve your relationship. We have themed them together into 52 chapters. Some of these ideas will get you out of the house while others will keep you in. Some involve other people, others just the pair of you. As far as possible we have suggested possibilities that could be attempted by couples at any age of their lives and stage of relationship. We have road tested nearly all of them and had a lot of fun in the process. That doesn't mean we are experts in photography, ballroom dancing, cookery evening classes and so on – just that we've given them a go.

Whether you use these ideas as suggested or adapt them to your particular circumstances doesn't matter too much. You might like to use them as a catalyst to develop your own thoughts and suggestions. If you are lucky enough to have an unlimited budget to re-energise your relationship, great. If, like us, you have more restricted funds, you'll be pleased to learn most of our ideas are inexpensive. We won't recommend any balloon flights around the Valley of the Kings or weekend breaks to outer space. In relationships, thoughtfulness, time and meaningful gestures matter more than money.

The most contented couples we know have a positive outlook and are what you might call 'have a go merchants', players rather than spectators in the game of life. People, in other words, whose lives are full of diverse activities, types who work and play hard, who are excited rather than intimidated by change and who look forward rather than back. This is a mindset we've adopted and one we'll help you cultivate.

A bit about us: between us, we've experienced passion, bitterness, excitement, jealousy, betrayal, exhilaration, divorce, boredom and anger. Wherever you're at in your relationship, we've been there: Sabina's shouted, Peter's sulked. We've done our share of door slamming, bag packing and swearing. Since then, we've found better ways, brilliant ways, of sorting out arguments, disagreements and seemingly irreconcilable differences. And they work.

To outsiders, we sometimes seem an unusual pair. When we first met and fell in love, it was an inconvenient match, throwing together four cultures, an age gap of over two decades and different values. Yet each of us recognised something in the other. We felt poured out of the same bottle, somehow made of the same stuff. And despite a few hurdles on the road to happily ever after, we've sussed a few things out. Our different professional backgrounds, diverse friendships and families have given us many great ideas to retain the sparkle. We know these 52 Brilliant Ideas worked for us, and they'll work for other people too. People like you.

